

History

Fundamentals 3

World History
 from **Beginnings**
 to **500 CE**
Boost confidence & test scores!

What Is History?

History is the study of the past. Studying the early history of the world teaches you about the beginnings of **human civilization**. You analyze how we evolved from small bands of **nomadic hunter-gatherers** to builders of vast **empires**, controlling our own **food supplies**, forming organized **religions** and **governments**, and creating **cities, arts, and literature**.

[**ABOUT THIS GUIDE:** (1) Unless otherwise specified, all **dates are approximate** and theoretical; (2) terms used follow National Standards for the subject; (3) * = present-day names for these countries.]

Prehistoric Era (Beginnings-8000 BCE)

- Long periods of **Ice Ages** characterize the **Prehistoric era**, with glaciers causing water levels to fall and more land to be exposed.
- Hominids**, ancestors of modern human beings, evolve in Africa and slowly migrate to all the continents except Antarctica.
- Ancient humans are **hunters** and **gatherers** and use **stone tools**.

Hominids control fire

Early Modern Humans begin migration to Americas

500,000 BCE**250,000 BCE****15,000 BCE***Homo sapiens* first appear in Africa

[All dates in this section are approximate and theoretical.]

before 3 million BCE	First known hominids appear on the grasslands of central Africa (possibly as long ago as 6 million BCE)
2.5 million BCE	<i>Homo habilis</i> ("skillful human") evolves in Africa: has small brain, uses crude stone tools , most likely is a scavenger
1.8 million BCE	<i>Homo erectus</i> ("upright human") evolves in Africa: stands upright, is taller, has bigger brain, uses more complex tools; lives in small hunter-gatherer bands; migrates to southern Asia and Europe
	500,000 BCE <i>Homo erectus</i> is likely first to control fire , offering protection from animals and allowing bands to live in colder climates
250,000 BCE	<i>Homo sapiens</i> ("wise human") evolves in Africa: looks similar to modern humans; uses hand axe and other more advanced tools; most likely uses spoken language ; shows evidence of ritual burial of dead and caring for sick and injured
100,000 BCE	Descendants of <i>Homo sapiens</i> known as Early Modern Humans (EMHs) begin slowly migrating to Asia, Australia, and Europe, most likely in search of food; come into contact with Neanderthals , a closely related species that eventually dies out
40,000 BCE	EMHs in Europe, Africa, and Asia invent bow and arrow , allowing for safer, long-distance hunting (boomerang in Australia)
30,000 BCE	Earliest known cave paintings are made by EMHs in France; most images are animals, such as lions, mammoths, horses, and deer
15,000 BCE	EMHs begin migrating to the Americas, possibly crossing a land bridge from Asia across the Bering Strait
10,000 BCE	EMHs begin domesticating dogs as hunting partners and protectors
9000 BCE	Last Ice Age ends: climate warms and sea levels rise rapidly; continents achieve their present outline; more plants are available as food sources; many Ice Age animals become extinct
8000 BCE	All hominids except for modern humans (<i>Homo sapiens</i> , <i>sapiens</i>) are extinct; world population is likely around 5 million

Facts about Early Modern Humans (c. 100,000–8000 BCE)

- Live in small bands of related families on every continent except Antarctica
- Are nomads, traveling with the seasons in search of food
- Set up camps in caves and rock shelters and later build simple huts and tents
- Are hunters and gatherers: gather wild fruits and plants, nuts, roots, and seeds; catch fish, turtles, birds, and rodents; hunt giant oxen, woolly rhinoceroses, mammoths, reindeer, bison, and other large animals
- Sharpen stones, bones, antlers, and tusks to make spears, knives, and arrow heads for hunting, needles for sewing, and hooks for fishing
- Wear simple clothing made of animal skins and furs, sometimes decorated with ivory, shell, amber, bone-and-tooth beads, and pendants
- Use fire for light, warmth, cooking, and making better tools and weapons
- Use spoken language and live with domesticated dogs
- Make paintings, sculptures, carvings, and musical instruments

Early Farming Societies (8000-4000 BCE)

- People begin the shift from hunting and gathering to **farming** in **river valleys** where floods deposit rich soil and water crops.
- People begin **domesticating animals** for food, hides, and fleece.
- Farming leads to the development of **permanent settlements**, growing populations, **trade, specialization**, and more **advanced tools**.

Farming of grains has begun in Fertile Crescent

Irrigation is developed in Mesopotamia and Egypt

8000 BCE**7500 BCE****5000 BCE**

Jericho, one of earliest known towns, is built

[All dates in this section are approximate and theoretical.]

[* = present-day names for these countries]

8000 BCE	People are domesticating sheep and goats as a source of food; some nomadic societies switch from hunting to herding
	Cultivation of grains (wheat and barley) has begun in Middle East region known as the "Fertile Crescent," especially along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Mesopotamia (now Iraq and parts of Syria) (<i>The chart at the bottom of this page shows the locations of early farming regions.</i>)
	People most likely have invented the wheel (oldest concrete evidence of wheels is from Mesopotamia c. 3500 BCE)
7000 BCE	People are making pottery , clay pots for storing food and drinks
	Cultivation of maize (corn) has begun in Mexico* and Central America*
6500 BCE	Agricultural production in Middle East reaches level that can support larger populations; first known walled towns have been built: Jericho (c. 7500 BCE) in present-day Israel and Çatal Hüyük (c. 8000 BCE) in present-day Turkey; food surpluses allow for trade and specialization —some people only farm, some make tools, some serve as priests or leaders, etc.
6000 BCE	Organized agriculture has developed along the Nile River in Egypt*, the Yellow River (Huang He) in China*, and the Indus River in India* and Pakistan*
	People domesticate pigs and cattle for food
	Plant fibers and fleece of sheep and goats are used to make cloth
	Bricks made from clay are used to build homes and other buildings in Egypt and Mesopotamia
5000 BCE	People in Mesopotamia and Egypt build levees and dig ditches to water crops (development of irrigation); requires large-scale cooperation and organization, leading to early forms of government
	People in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and what is now Turkey are among earliest users of copper and gold (first metals mined and crafted by humans)
4000 BCE	Wooden plows have replaced digging sticks in Mesopotamia
	Nomadic tribes of the Eurasian steppes (plains region stretching between Europe and Asia) begin to domesticate horses (most likely for food, milk, and hides rather than for loading or riding)
	World population is about 7 million

Early Farming Areas

TIGRIS-EUPHRATES VALLEY

 8000 BCE
 barley, wheat, goats, sheep

NILE VALLEY

 6000 BCE
 barley, wheat, cattle, goats, sheep

INDUS VALLEY

 6000 BCE
 barley, wheat, cattle, goats, sheep

ANDEAN

 7800 BCE
 beans, chili peppers, alpacas, llamas

YELLOW RIVER VALLEY

 6000 BCE
 millet, chickens, pigs

MESOAMERICA

 3400 BCE
 beans, chili peppers, maize, turkeys

Early Civilizations (4000-1000 BCE)

- Settled farming communities lead to the development of **civilizations** with large **cities** and organized **governments** and **religions**.
- People invent **writing** and **number systems**, **calendars**, **new tools**, and **new building methods**.
- Competition for resources and power sparks **wars** and **invasions**.

Sumerians develop first known civilization in Mesopotamia	United Egyptian Empire begins	Olmec civilization develops in Mexico*
3500 BCE	3000 BCE	2800 BCE
	Indus Valley civilization develops in India* and Pakistan*	Shang dynasty begins in China*
	1750 BCE	1350 BCE

[All dates in this section are approximate and theoretical.]

[* = present-day names for these countries]

4000 BCE	The world's first known civilizations begin to develop in the Middle East, known as the "cradle of civilization" (See What Makes a Civilization? and Four Ancient River Valley Civilizations on page 4 of this guide for details.)
3500 BCE	Bronze Age begins as people in present-day Turkey develop process of making stronger, more durable bronze tools and weapons
	City-states form in Sumer (southern part of Mesopotamia) and in Egypt: each consists of a walled city surrounded by farmlands; each has its own government and religious leaders; fighting is common
	Sumerians build first carts/wagons with wheels and invent first known number system and calendar (lunar)
3100 BCE	Sumerians and Egyptians begin using picture symbols that develop into complete writing systems (cuneiform and hieroglyphics)
3000 BCE	Indus Valley civilization begins in India* and Pakistan*: builds large, planned cities with gridded streets, multi-level houses, and city-wide plumbing; develops written language (not deciphered)
	People in China are growing rice and producing silk; Egyptians have invented first known solar calendar and first version of paper, papyrus
2800 BCE	Two kingdoms of Egypt are united, starting the Egyptian Empire under dynastic leadership of pharaohs (god-kings)
	Minoan civilization arises on the Greek island of Crete: based on sea trade around the Mediterranean; among earliest makers of bronze; develops writing system (not deciphered)
2600 BCE	Old Kingdom of Egypt begins, known for achievements in building: the Great Pyramids (burial tombs for pharaohs) and the Great Sphinx of Giza are built
2500 BCE	People in the Indus Valley are growing rice , cotton , and sesame
2350 BCE	Sargon of Kish (city-state north of Sumer) uses first known organized army to conquer Mesopotamia and establish Akkadian Empire
2000 BCE	Epic of Gilgamesh , one of the earliest known works of literature, is written down on clay tablets and tells a story about a Sumerian king (Gilgamesh) who lived around 2700 BCE
	Pastoral/nomadic societies of Eurasian steppes are first known to ride horses and use them to pull war chariots; begin massive migrations into northeastern Europe and southeastern Asia
	People in Egypt, Babylon, India, and China are conducting systematic astronomical observations
	According to the Bible, Abraham makes covenant with God and begins journey from Sumerian city-state Ur to Canaan (Israel); traditionally marks beginning of Judaism
1980 BCE	Middle Kingdom of Egypt begins; known for increased trade and general stability and prosperity; classical period of art; Egypt conquers Nubia to its south, gaining control of that land's trade routes and its gold, copper, stone, and other natural resources
1790 BCE	Hammurabi of Babylon (city-state near Kish) begins conquest of Mesopotamia; establishes the Babylonian Empire ; compiles the Code of Hammurabi , the first known written code of laws
1750 BCE	Shang Dynasty begins as first united dynasty in China: uses war chariots and bronze weapons; develops China's first writing system (c. 1500 BCE) based on characters; ancestor worship becomes prevalent in China
1600 BCE	Mycenaean civilization develops on Greek mainland: consists of many city-states led by warrior kings, united only in wartime; sea traders and invaders; source of many later Greek epics and myths
	Indo-European chariot-riding warriors from what is now Turkey invade and conquer Middle East; form Hittite Empire that eventually includes Mesopotamia, Canaan (Israel), Syria, and northern Egypt
1540 BCE	New Kingdom of Egypt begins: known for territorial expansion and famous rulers; Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten) introduces monotheism during reign (c. 1352–1336 BCE)
1500 BCE	Aryans , nomadic Indo-Europeans, invade India from Eurasia, scattering or destroying ancient cultures of Indus Valley; introduce their language, Sanskrit , and their religion, which forms Hinduism
	Stonehenge , a circular monument of huge rocks, is completed in England, showing emergence of advanced societies in the region
1400 BCE	Mycenaean Greeks conquer Crete; Minoan civilization begins to decline
1350 BCE	Olmec civilization develops in Mexico: known as the "Mother Civilization" because of its influence on later civilizations in region; develops writing system and solar calendar; builds pyramid temples
1250 BCE	Moses leads Israelite slaves out of Egypt and begins journey to Canaan; according to the Bible, Moses receives the Ten Commandments during this journey, known as "the Exodus"
1200 BCE	Hittite Empire collapses for still unknown reasons
1122 BCE	In China, Shang rule is overthrown by nomadic warriors, starting Zhou Dynasty ; Mandate of Heaven is established (heaven gives emperors the right to rule China)
1100 BCE	Mycenaean civilization ends due to invasions and civil wars, starting a 300-year period of decline known as the Greek Dark Ages
1075 BCE	United Egyptian Empire ends with civil wars, political weakness, and invasions, starting a 300-year period of upheaval
1000 BCE	World population is about 50 million



Great Sphinx of Giza

Classical Traditions,



Jerusalem is capital of Kingdom of Israel

1000 BCE	508 BCE
	Democratic government forms in Athens

[Most dates in this section are approximate and some are theoretical.]

1000 BCE	Iron Age begins after Hittite process of iron smelting and smithing is exposed and spreads through Middle East and Mediterranean region
	Israelites have formed their own country in Canaan named Israel ; its second king, David , makes Jerusalem the capital and center of Jewish religion
	Phoenicians (out of what are now Syria and Lebanon) begin founding colonies around the Mediterranean; dominate trade in region; develop ramming galley warship later copied by Greeks and Romans; their alphabet becomes basis of many others
	Most of the Vedas , Hinduism's oldest and most sacred texts, have been composed and India's hereditary caste system is in place
960 BCE	Israel's King Solomon builds a temple in Jerusalem to be the spiritual center of the Jewish people
900 BCE	In the Americas, invaders destroy the oldest-known Olmec city, San Lorenzo, in Mexico; Olmecs begin building new city, La Venta
800s BCE	Greeks begin building city-states ; larger ones eventually start colonies around Mediterranean region; city-states do not form united Greek empire, but share common cultural identity with a shared language (based on Phoenician alphabet) and religion (many gods)
814 BCE	Phoenicians found Carthage in North Africa; it eventually becomes so powerful that it leads an informal empire of Phoenician colonies
700s BCE	Greek poet Homer (and possibly others) creates famous epics the <i>Iliad</i> and the <i>Odyssey</i> , based on ancient stories passed down orally
776 BCE	First Olympic Games are held in Greece: city-states compete peacefully to honor the god Zeus
753 BCE	According to legend, Rome is founded by Romulus
730 BCE	Kushites (Nubia) take control of Egypt; spend next 50 years fighting Assyrians for control of southwestern Asia
720 BCE	Israel is crushed by Assyrians; 10 tribes are exiled (Ten Lost Tribes); only Judah (southern half of old Israelite Kingdom) remains
664 BCE	Assyrians have conquered and reunited all of Egypt
612 BCE	Assyrian Empire ends when Nineveh is destroyed by invasion of Medes (from what is now Iran) and New Babylonians
600 BCE	Lydian government in what is now Turkey is first to coin money ; people no longer have to barter or weigh silver or gold to trade
	Etruscans from northern Italy take control of Rome, bringing new ideas and culture through trade with Greece
586 BCE	New Babylonians conquer Judah and exile Judeans to Babylon as slaves; marks beginning of Jewish Diaspora : religion becomes less place-specific, study and prayers replace sacrifices at temple
565 BCE	Siddhartha Gautama ("the Buddha") is born in India; after his death in 483 BCE, his teachings become the foundation of Buddhism
551 BCE	Confucius is born in China; develops and teaches ethical and social philosophy; the <i>Analects</i> or <i>Lun-yü</i> ("collected sayings") are later compiled by the second generation of Confucian disciples
539 BCE	King Cyrus begins using enormous and powerful Persian army (horses, chariots, bronze weapons and armor) to form the Persian Empire , stretching from India to Egypt; with king's support, Zoroastrianism becomes popular religion in Persian Empire
538 BCE	Cyrus begins allowing many exiled Jews to return to Judea; temple is soon rebuilt in Jerusalem; the Torah (first 5 books of the Bible) becomes the law and basis of society in Judea
522 BCE	Darius I becomes Persian emperor: greatly organizes empire, builds networks of roads and couriers; allows diverse population to keep their own customs and local leaders
515 BCE	Legendary Sun Zi in China writes <i>The Art of War</i> , the oldest known and most influential military strategy guide
509 BCE	Republic is founded in Rome , with leaders elected by citizens to make government decisions in senate and assemblies
508 BCE	Democratic government begins to develop in Greek city-state of Athens , eventually all free men over age 20 have a vote in the assembly; all decisions are made by majority rule
490-479 BCE	Greeks defeat invading Persian forces in two separate wars; fear of future attacks causes city-states to form alliances: Sparta leads Peloponnesian League and Athens leads the Delian League



Buddha

Major Religions & Giant Empires (1000 BCE-500 CE)

- River valley civilizations spread and new **urban centers** develop.
- People make innovations in **technology, building, sciences, philosophy, government, religion**, and the **arts**.
- **Empire building** creates much larger spheres of **economic** and **cultural interaction** with larger bureaucracies.



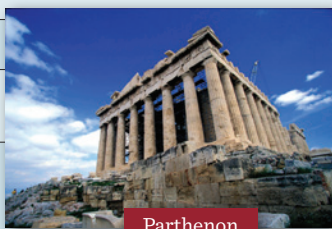
Great Wall of China is begun

Christianity becomes official religion of Roman Empire

221 BCE**27 BCE****380 CE**

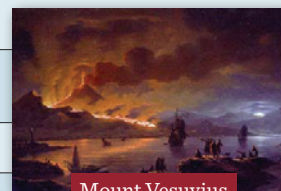
Roman Empire begins

479 BCE	The Golden Age of Athens begins under leadership of Pericles, who encourages arts and sciences; Herodotus writes history; Sophocles writes plays; Hippocrates makes advances in medicine
475 BCE	Zhou Dynasty in China begins to lose power, starting the Warring States Period; China divides into several states ruled by warlord-kings who constantly fight for supremacy
450 BCE	The Twelve Tables establish a legal system for the Roman Republic
432 BCE	Construction of Parthenon , a temple to Athena (Greek goddess of wisdom and war), is completed in Athens
431-404 BCE	Peloponnesian Wars break out between Athens and Sparta and their allies; Sparta wins, but Athens continues as cultural center
399 BCE	Greek Philosopher Socrates is sentenced to death for teaching dangerous ideas in Athens; his student Plato later starts philosophy school in Athens; Plato's student Aristotle goes on to make great advances in law, economics, astronomy, zoology, and botany
334 BCE	Alexander the Great becomes king of Macedonia (Balkan Peninsula) and begins conquest of Greek colonies under Persian control; eventually his empire stretches from Europe to India, including Egypt and the rest of the conquered Persian Empire
331 BCE	Hellenistic Age begins, with Alexander's rule spreading Greek culture; Alexandria in Egypt becomes the center of learning with largest and most famous library of ancient times; Euclid and later Archimedes make great advances in mathematics and physics
323 BCE	Alexander the Great dies; empire is divided among his generals
320 BCE	Mauryan Empire begins in India; Ashoka the Great (269–232 BCE) becomes famous for his principles of non-violence and religious tolerance; helps spread Buddhism to Southeast Asia
305 BCE	One of Alexander's general s, Ptolemy, takes control of Egypt, starting Ptolemaic dynasty , the last dynasty of pharaohs
300 BCE	<i>Tao-Te Ching</i> has been written (most likely by several contributors over hundreds of years, but traditionally ascribed to Chinese philosopher Lao-tse c. 550 BCE); forms the foundation of Taoism
275 BCE	Romans have taken control of most of Italian Peninsula
270 BCE	Kingdom of Kush (Nubia) begins Meriotic period: is center of Africa's iron production, center of trade along Nile, Red Sea, and overland around Africa; written Nubian language is created (undeciphered)
221 BCE	In China, Qin dynasty is founded; establishes Legalism (the strict following of laws and use of bureaucracy); standardizes money, weights, writing, and education in China; connects existing walls to build the Great Wall of China for protection from invaders
206 BCE	Qin dynasty collapses under civil wars in China; Han dynasty gains power; combines Legalism with Confucianism as guiding principles of government; sets up first civil service examinations
146 BCE	Romans win last of three Punic Wars against Carthage; results in Roman control and domination of Mediterranean region; land is divided into provinces, each ruled by a Roman governor
105 BCE	Modern paper is invented in China
100 BCE	Eastern and western traders have begun traveling along the Silk Road , a network of trade routes linking the Mediterranean and China; Buddhism spreads along route (See The Silk Road on page 4 of this guide for a map and more details.)
46 BCE	Roman general Julius Caesar wins a 3-year civil war and is appointed dictator, making Rome a dictatorship; is assassinated by a group of senators 2 years later, starting another civil war
31 BCE	Caesar's adopted son, Octavian, defeats rival Roman general Mark Antony and Cleopatra of Egypt at Battle of Actium; becomes Augustus Caesar , the first Emperor of the Roman Empire
30 BCE	Egypt is made part of the Roman Empire; Egyptian dynasties end
27 BCE	Pax Romana (Roman Peace) spreads across empire under rule of Augustus: laws give people more rights; network of paved roads and aqueducts and many public buildings are constructed; Latin becomes language of government and education in empire
4 BCE	Jesus Christ is believed to have been born in Bethlehem; begins his own ministry about 20 years later

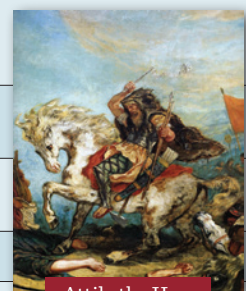


Parthenon

CE	[<i>Human history enters Common Era</i> (CE)]
30 CE	Jesus Christ is crucified in Jerusalem; his disciple Paul soon begins missionary journeys throughout Roman Empire, converting people to Christianity as a new sect of Judaism
64 CE	Persecution of Christians begins under Roman rule of Nero
70 CE	The Great Jewish Revolt against Roman rule ends with destruction of the Second Temple and the fall of Jerusalem
79 CE	Mount Vesuvius erupts, killing thousands in Herculaneum and Pompeii south of Rome
80 CE	The Colosseum amphitheater is completed in Rome; becomes site of gladiator battles for 400 years
100 CE	Christianity has essentially been established as a religion separate from Judaism
117 CE	Roman Empire reaches peak of territorial expansion (See The Roman Empire on page 4 of this guide for a map and details.)
127 CE	Alexandrian astronomer Ptolemy makes first observation in support of his Earth-centered theory of solar system that prevails for more than 1,000 years
132 CE	Roman emperor Hadrian outlaws circumcision and orders Jerusalem be rebuilt as Roman pagan city, sparking Jewish revolt ; after it is suppressed 4 years later, Rome exiles most Jews, forbids most Jewish practices, and renames Judea "Palestine"
200 CE	Roman Empire begins to decline under pressure of outside attacks, political conflicts, and weak, corrupt leadership
220 CE	Han dynasty ends in China under pressure of fighting factions and peasant uprisings; China is separated into three kingdoms
265 CE	Chin dynasty begins in China, but is never strong and eventually collapses after Hun invasion; begins a long period in China marked by disunity and internal strife
300 CE	Mayan civilization develops in rain forests of Central America and Mexico: builds large cities with stone pyramid temples; worships many nature-based gods; develops written language, number system, and calendars
307 CE	Constantine becomes one of several claiming to be emperor of Roman Empire; several years of civil wars ensue for control
313 CE	After converting to Christianity, Constantine issues Edict of Milan , granting religious freedom throughout Roman Empire
320 CE	Gupta Empire is established in India, beginning a period of peace, economic growth, and advances in art and science, known as "India's Golden Age"; Buddhist philosophy and art flourish
325 CE	Constantine brings Christian leaders from around the Roman Empire to meet at the Council of Nicaea to standardize Christian teachings; establishes official definition of the Trinity
330 CE	To protect against invasions, Constantine moves capital of Roman Empire from Rome to Greek city of Byzantium and renames it Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey)
370 CE	Huns , nomadic pastoral peoples from Central Asia, begin invasion of Europe, destroying and pillaging as they move west on horseback
380 CE	Christianity is made official religion of Roman Empire; canonization of Old and New Testaments is essentially complete (See Major Religions on page 4 of this guide for a table listing several of the world's major religions developed by 500 CE.)
395 CE	Roman Empire is split in two —Western Roman Empire with Rome as capital and Eastern Roman Empire with Constantinople as capital
400 CE	Western Roman Empire begins to face increased attacks from Germanic tribes (" barbarians ") in search of new lands after their own lands have been taken over by Huns
445 CE	Attila becomes sole ruler of Hun Empire; attacks Eastern Roman Empire for third time (452 CE); Romans agree to pay annual tribute
455 CE	Hun Empire collapses due to fighting among Attila's successors and rebellions in conquered regions; Huns disappear from history
476 CE	Germanic invaders conquer city of Rome, marking the end of the Western Roman Empire
500 CE	Western Roman Empire has been separated into several kingdoms formed by Germanic tribes : Visigoths in Italy and Spain; Franks in Gaul; Angles and Saxons in England
	World population is about 200 million



Mount Vesuvius



Attila the Hun

What Makes a Civilization?

Not all of the characteristics listed below have to be present for a particular cultural group to be classified as an **ancient civilization**, but all of them are considered **evidence of relatively complex societies**.

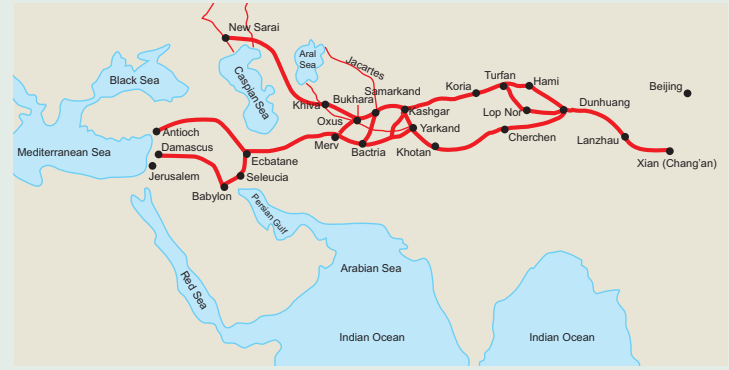
- **Control of food supply:** using agriculture and/or domestication of animals
- **Urban society:** living in communities with higher population densities
- **Literacy:** developing writing systems to keep records and communicate information
- **Government:** creating sets of rules, leaders, or organization for society
- **Specialization/division of labor:** having members of a community do different tasks according to their abilities and the community's needs
- **Social classes:** giving different persons within a society different quantities or qualities of power, rights, and responsibilities
- **Advanced technical skills:** problem-solving with tools and new processes, such as working with metals or creating irrigation systems
- **Concept of time:** using patterns like the seasons, sunrise and sunset, or tides to predict and plan events
- **Leisure:** recognizing the value of the arts and entertainment
- **Education/criticism:** striving to improve as an individual or as a culture
- **Transportation networks:** building and using roads, boats, or animals as a means of transportation
- **Trade networks:** exchanging surplus goods or services for needed ones
- **Monumental architecture:** creating public buildings, such as plazas or temples, built by many people for many people
- **Religion:** having beliefs that provide answers to "unanswerable" questions, guided by religious specialists or leaders, such as shamans or priests

Four Ancient River Valley Civilizations

Civilization	Geography	Innovations	Culture/Society
Tigris-Euphrates River Valley (present-day Iraq and western Syria)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rivers provided unpredictable floods, causing need for irrigation Deserts and hills surrounding valley were fairly easy to cross, leading to many invasions and conquests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cuneiform Arches and ziggurats (towering stepped temples made of mud and stone) Wheel Lunar calendar First number system First written laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class structure with kings and priests at top followed by middle class and slaves Polytheistic religion, with nature-based gods Women had more rights than in other ancient civilizations
Nile River Valley (present-day Egypt)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> River provided predictable floods, food, and transportation Deserts and seas surrounding valley offered some protection from invasion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hieroglyphics Papyrus Solar calendar with 365 days Great Pyramids and Great Sphinx 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rigid class structure with the pharaoh at the top followed by priests, artisans, farmers, and slaves Polytheistic religion included belief in life after death
Yellow River Valley (present-day China)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> River had predictable floods, deposited fertile, yellow soil Mountains and the Gobi Desert surrounding China caused isolation from other civilizations and cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written language based on characters Lunar calendar Silk production Predicted eclipses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class structure based on families: king, nobles, and peasants Religion based on worship of ancestors and several nature gods
Indus River Valley (present-day India and Pakistan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> River had unpredictable floods, but region had predictable monsoons (seasonal winds bringing rainstorms) Himalayas border to the north, but a pass allowed for entry into the region and invasion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written language based on characters and then on Sanskrit Built city-wide water and sewage systems Developed decimal number system and concept of zero 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rigid hereditary caste system evolves: first are Brahmins (priests and scholars), then rulers and warriors; farmers and merchants; laborers and servants; and last, the Untouchables (those doing the worst jobs) Polytheistic ancient religions evolved into Hinduism

The Silk Road

Covering more than 7,000 miles, the **"Silk Road"** consisted of dozens of unpaved trade routes connecting Asia and India with Europe and the Mediterranean. For 1,500 years, it served as the primary conduit for exchanging goods and ideas between East and West.



The Roman Empire

At its height, the **Roman Empire** was the largest empire in history. It covered about 2.5 million square miles and had a population of about 60 million people on 3 continents.



Major Religions

Several of the world's major religions had developed by 500 CE. The monotheism of Judaism formed the basis of Christianity (and later Islam). Buddhism stemmed from Hinduism in India. Often described as philosophies, Confucianism and Taoism both evolved as different reactions to chaotic conditions in China during the Warring States Period.

Religion	Founded	Sacred Texts
Judaism	About 2000 BCE when Abraham made covenant with God	Tanakh: <i>Torah</i> , <i>Nebi'im</i> , <i>Ketuvim</i> (Law, Prophets, Writings); Talmud , <i>Mishna</i> , <i>Gemara</i>
Hinduism	No founder and no known date of origin; dates to at least 1500 BCE; likely derives from Aryan religion	Vedas , <i>Upanishads</i> , <i>Sutras</i> , Bhagavad Gita
Buddhism	Around 520 BCE, based on teachings of Siddhartha Gautama ("the Buddha"), an Indian prince (480–405 BCE)	Pali Canon (<i>Tipitaka</i>), numerous Mahayana sutras
Confucianism	During 5th–6th centuries BCE, based on teachings of Confucius (565–483 BCE)	Lun-yü (<i>Analects</i>)
Taoism (Daoism)	Tradition holds it was founded around 550 BCE by Lao-Tze, but more likely was founded about 200 years later	Tao-te Ching (<i>The Book of the Way and Its Power</i>)
Christianity	1st century CE after the death of Jesus Christ	The Bible (comprised of the Old Testament and the New Testament)

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